

Message Text

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ACTION IO-14

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9254
INFO USUN NEW YORK 763

C O N F I D E N T I A L COLOMBO 0183

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINR, UNGA, CG, LOS

SUBJ: AMBASSADOR'S IMPRESSIONS OF B.J. FERNANDO, SRI LANKA'S
NEW PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE TO THE UNITED NATIONS

1. AMBASSADOR WRIGGINS MET WITH B.J. FERNANDO AND HIS WIFE
ON JANUARY 3. HIS OBSERVATIONS ON FERNANDO FOLLOW.
2. FERNANDO IS AN EXPERIENCED LAWYER, IS LUCID IN DISCUSSION,
AND AT EASE AS A PERSON. A MEMBER OF THE DELEGATION TO THE
RECENT GENERAL ASSEMBLY, HE APPEARS TO HAVE A REALISTIC SENSE
OF THE MULTIFARIOUS TASKS AHEAD, RECOGNIZING THE SPECIAL BUR-
DENS (AND OPPORTUNITIES) AS A RESULT OF SRI LANKA'S ROLE AS
LEADER OF THE G-77.
3. HE REPORTED THAT AT THE UN IT IS SAID THAT BEFORE THE UNP
CAME TO POWER THOSE MEMBERS OF THE G-77 WHO WERE "LEFT OF
CENTER" WHO DID NOT KNOW WHAT LINE TO TAKE WOULD FOLLOW
SRI LANKA. NOW, THOSE "TO THE RIGHT OF CENTER" WHO DON'T HAVE
SPECIFIC POSITIONS FOLLOW OUR LEAD.
4. ON AMERASINGHE, HE SAID THAT THE GSL WAS HOPING SOME WAY
COULD BE FOUND SO THAT HE COULD BE APPROVED AS PRESIDENT OF
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THE LOS "BY ACCLAMATION," AS HAD OCCURRED IN A RECENT UN
SESSION WHEN A VOTE COULD NOT BE TAKEN BECAUSE OF THE CAM-
BODIAN PROBLEM.

5. HE SHOWED NONE OF THE FAMILIAR SOUTH ASIAN HANG-UPS, AND
HE OUGHT TO BE A USEFUL ADDITION TO THE UN COMMUNITY. HE
RECALLED WITH PLEASURE THE VISITS HE HAD BEEN ABLE TO MAKE TO

FAMILIES OUTSIDE NEW YORK, AND SEEMED TO HAVE A GENUINE
POSITIVE FEELING ABOUT THE U.S. THOUGH A BIT ANXIOUS ABOUT
LIVING IN NEW YORK, HIS WORRIES WERE MODERATE COMPARED TO
THOSE EXPERIENCED BY MANY CEYLONESE.
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